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BEHIND ALL THE ODDS, THERE IS A STRING OF HOPE

The eagles made big wide arches at noon in the clear blue sky. Crows clapped their clumsy wings, Josh became disturbed. He woke up from his nap, which he decided to took in his balcony. Josh ran his slender fingers through his cloudy grey hair, his belly like an inflated balloon stood before him, he couldn't see his toes. Josh adjusted his pyjamas as they were about to fall off. Josh desperately needed a cup of coffee... He called serene out loud.. "Serene, could you please bring me a cup of coffee?" There was no reply. He got angry and went to the kitchen. Serene was not there. "Where did serene go?" he asked himself. He sat on the couch of the dining room and dozed off again.

Where was Serene, where did she



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go, these questions made Josh anxious even in his unconscious mind. Serene was his wife, so if she would've left, she should've told him. The alarm went off, Josh woke up, from his dream that had happened few months ago and this dream was real, Serene has been missing ever since.

"Clara, wake up, it's time for you to go to school...."

"Just few more minutes dad."

"No few more minutes, get up clara you are fifteen, you need to take care of yourself" said Josh.

Clara woke up yawning, she looked like a sloth who is always sleeping. When she opened her eyes, the sunlight touched her blooming face and when it touched her eyes, she reflected her mother's hazelnut eyes. Josh looked

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at her for a few minutes.

"Josh, do you think this is a right decision?"

"I do, Serene, you are the love of my life love, I want to be with you till there is no life on this planet."

"It could be dangerous Josh, it's not easy as you think it is."

"Are you saying these because of your past as a prostitute, Serene?"

Serene's heart shattered into glasses and each one of the shards pierced through her mind making a point hole, in which she could see her past life as a prostitute. Serene had scars all over her body ^{which} men had made on her body and her mind. She covered it all by makeup. Don't they have a life in the society? Don't they have a permission

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to have one.

"Dad, what are you thinking, where are you."

"Oh nothing clara, it's just that I remembered your mother."

"Have you talked to the police, after then Dad?"

"No, I haven't but there is an appointment today, to meet one of them."

"So, are you going to drop me off at school or not, it's time."

"Oh! I forgot, come let's go."

"Before that, you need to shower dad and get ready."

Josh always spent his time daydreaming and thinking about the past life before clara was born. Clara is now fifteen.

Serene was thirty two years old. She met Josh at a Cafe. The Josh She met

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was a handsome looking, perfect from top to bottom having cloudy hair, tall and sleek. Everything was perfect back then. Serene's childhood was not at all what a child could bear. She went to take prostitution at the age of fifteen, she had been through many, her fair body full of red markings and scars were unbearable even to see. Her hazelnut eyes defined darkness and reflected pain before Josh came. Josh came into her life and made her life like a lamp which brightened up day by day. They fell in love.

"Love is between two personalities, Serene, two personalities becoming one and getting adjusted so that no one could ever paste them apart."

"You know Josh, you are my vivisteria."

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"vivivisteria, what is that."

"You will find out, at some point" said Serene. All of these memories played like a video in Josh's brain.

"Sir, Do you need something."

"Ah. yes, I filed a complaint about my wife went missing, and for that I had a meeting arranged today with commisioner Sahal."

"oh yes, you can go inside."

Serene went missing few months ago, no one knew where she went, where she could be and the most important question was why would've she left or is that someone took her. Nobody knew. Josh saw a man about forty years old, bulky and bald scrolling through his phone.

"Excuse me Sir,"

"oh yes. Josh right?"



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"Yes Sir."

"So can you tell the details about your wife went missing?"

"Yes Sir, Serene went missing on 13th May 2016; I woke up from my sleep one morning and I couldn't find her."

"Did you go somewhere the day before that" asked commissioner Sahal

"No Sir, we haven't."

"So tell me about your wife's, what is her profession, her past and everything you know."

"Sir, Serene's about thirty two years old, she is fair, have hazelnut eyes and she is quite quirky and have straight hair like my daughters."

"Mr, Josh I don't know how your daughters looks like, anyway what was she doing at that time?"

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"She was working at an IT Company at that time."

"Ok, so did she had any horrible incidents there or in her past?"

"No, she don't have anyone there to hate her like that."

"Mr Josh, you are hiding something terribly with us, If you reveal it now, we can move the procedure as fast as you like."

"Ummm.... Sir, A few years ago, she worked as a prostitute."

"Ah! A prostitute, that's where the whole thing lies Mr Josh. It could've been that one reason, your wife went missing and there are chances that your wife could've been murdered."

"Murdered? What are you saying



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Mr Sahal, she became a prostitute because of her situation, when she was a child, her parents sold her for money. She didn't knew anything about that at her age. She was a child. When she realised that it was not she was meant to be. She escaped from that Asylum and have been living her life on her own ever since."

Josh said these words in one breath and his eyes became red, his heart was beating faster and he felt like releasing an arrow from a bow towards the commissioners:

"Mr Josh, there is no need for you to shout at me, and there is ~~no~~ reason for me to being yelled at by you. Remember your place."

"I'm sorry Sir, I blurted these all

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out because, I haven't had a chance to. Every relative, advocate, each person I'm approaching to with her case, they all just point out at this matter, "She ~~She is a~~ ~~p~~ was a prostitute" why?

"Mr Josh, we understand your situation and I said we because every policemen here knows and understand your situation. So please calm down."

Josh sat on a bench there, he couldn't help it he cried like an infant, whenever he tried to stop, it became more and more nuisance. Somehow dara got there and tried to make him calm down.

"Breaking News, The body of a woman who is about thirty five years old, has been found near the Ioka Street Mumbai." The news attained all the attention of people who was there



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at the police Station. The news struck him like a thunder bolt at first he couldn't believe it.

"Would it be my Serene?"

"No, Dad. It's not her."

"Are you sure, clara, that it's not her?"

"Dad, stop this. It's not her."

Suddenly the volume of the news channel got increased. "The police had found that the body belonged to a women who worked as a prostitute few years back but no longer work as one. She has been murdered very cruelly and she had markings and scars all over her body says the police.

The women who works in this field are protesting now by having boards saying "Come to us, If you need, but why this cruelty?" More clarification need to be got. This is



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quite a disturbing news to hear. The generation is Upgrading and the society values are going backwards. What is happening to this world? T.V (Television) got switched off.

clara's eyes got watery. It fell down like a stream. Tears made her cheeks shine even in this much sadness. She was only fifteen, three years older than her mother when she was sold by her parents. What did clara do to experience such a situation like this. The last leaf of hope fell down. Even the breeze became silent as it was commanding everything to keep silent. people muttered, whispered about the tragic death of Serene.

Amidst the shattered pieces of Josh's and clara's heart, stood the



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memories they had with Serene. Serene never let them to get their hopes down. She was strong, ferocious when her dignity was questioned and she stood against her childhood life. She faced the obstacles. Still she didn't deserved a good place in this society of literacy, humanity and peace.

Josh and clara got adjusted to their new opulence. They didn't had anything else to be lost. They lived in grief ever after that incident. Months passed, a letter came addressed to Josh and clara. "Dear Josh and clara, hope you are Well, I saw the news I am Sorry that you two had to go through all of this, I hope you get through all of this. Even when there is no assurance



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that you two can be recovered fully from the incident, there will still be a ray of hope coming into your lives. Wait for it and it will get there. Like a thunderbolt from a clear blue sky I will come int your life's again. Till then I have to be lovingly aparted from you?"

clara read this to Josh and wondered who could've written the letter.

whoever it was, it gave them a strength to hope, a new thinking for a new life.

years passed, clara and Josh now have a healthy life and it was 13th may 2020, when cleaning up the sack clara found a letter which was the same one they had read a few years ago and this time clara noticed something on the



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postmark. Instead of addressing it to name of Josh and clara; It said to my loving vivisteria and hazelnut eyes. It was Serene; she came like a wave into their lives but made a storm leaving them. Hope she will enter their lives like a breeze. Vivisteria as a flower held hope and new life, leaving all the past behind.